

## LSPA MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 5, 2012

The meeting started at 8:35am in the cafeteria.

### GUEST SPEAKER – ANDREA COGAN

Andrea announced that this year's Health Fair will be held on Friday, February 17, 2012. As in past years, it will be a full day. Andrea and Lynn Vozzella are currently working to secure all of the presenters and the stations that will be required. They need a number of volunteers – about 36, in total – to be partnered with the presenters (greeting them, directing them through the school, and generally shadowing them for the day, assisting them with whatever they need, etc.), to direct the children as they cycle through the fair, and to help beforehand with posters, emails, and other communications.

Andrea also reminded the LSPA that they will hold a recognition event on January 20<sup>th</sup> to acknowledge all the great efforts of the kids who are participating in the Triple Marathon. Parents should make sure to turn in the half marathon sheets **before** January 20<sup>th</sup> so their children can be recognized. Forms can be turned into classroom teachers or at the LSPA table across from the library.

### GUEST SPEAKER – JERI KATZ

Jeri, one of Lincoln's excellent reading specialists, spoke to the LSPA about how we as parents can support and encourage reading in our children. For early readers, she explained that in-school skill building focuses on phonemic awareness, blending, and rhyming. At home, reading or playing games with rhyming words (e.g. magnets on the fridge with endings, like -at, and then the letters that can build the words, cat, mat, bat, etc.) help build children's skills. Sight words (those that cannot be sounded out based on their spelling, such as "was") should be practiced, and of course, keep reading to your children!

Especially through the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, books with pictures are very helpful with fluency and comprehension – they help children "make predictions" about the words they are trying to read.

Jeri emphasized that reading level is highly variable through the beginning years, and it's not until about 3<sup>rd</sup> grade that children's abilities generally "even out" and the range of reading levels within a class narrows. In order to ensure children are successful, enthusiastic readers, it's important to encourage our children to read "just-right" books, or those that are neither too easy nor too hard for them to read. Jeri shared the "5 finger rule:" if a child tries to read a paragraph on his or her own and makes 5 or more mistakes or gets stuck 5 or more times, the book is probably too difficult for him or her.

Jeri also offered a few more tips for successful, at-home reading:

- It's okay for children to read at home at a lower level when reading independently. This can build fluency as well as confidence.
- When children misread a word or words, don't interrupt or correct unless their reading of the passage changes the meaning or intent. Flow is equally important as long as the meaning is preserved.
- The most important thing is to keep books and reading a part of children's evening routines. Therefore, it's okay to "take over" and read to your children if they are tired or struggling. They work hard during the day, and reading at home should not be a chore to them.

- There are websites that can help you and your children build their base skills and make good choices: one is starfall.com, which is great for sight words and phonics. Also, if you google “leveled book list,” you can find just-right books; also, bookwizard.com, from scholastic, is a helpful site.

Some of the LSPA members present brought up the need for some creative ways to make sure children receive additional guidance to select just-right books from their weekly library time – it was acknowledged that LeeAnn Toner simply does not always have the time in addition to the curriculum she must deliver in the short time she has. It was suggested that the Library Committee implement a few changes that might help, such as stocking a rolling cart with good choices extracted from the shelves, or a system by which kids or teachers can vote on good books, which are then marked (stickers, etc.) so others can find them.

In closing, Jeri thanked the LSPA on behalf of all of the reading specialists for the iPads. They are currently researching and vetting the (numerous) apps available, and Jeri said once they determine appropriate apps, she would be glad to share them with parents so they, too, can use them at home.

## **PRINCIPAL’S REPORT**

Kate Scanlon began with a reminder about Math Morning, which will be held on January 12<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-9:30am. She will send out an email blast to parents in the next few days.

The Winter Concert this year will be formatted differently: we will hold two concerts instead of one, with grades 3-5 performing on January 25<sup>th</sup>, and grades K-2 in early March. The hope is to mitigate the overcrowding we experience each year.

The after-school enrichment programs filled pretty well – only “Thinking, planning, doing” and “After-school sports” did not get enough participants. Kate asked for some “back-office” administrative help. Please email Kate if you can help.

Kate also provided an update on some changes to our staff: We are also welcoming two new staff members. Anna Pompeo is replacing Maureen Mitropoulos as a special education aide and Emily Cleary will be an aide in Eileen Swartz’s kindergarten.

The elementary school level redistricting effort is underway, and there will be public meetings soon, so please stay tuned. If you would like to stay abreast of the work of the committee, please visit their website, [winchesterredistricting.com](http://winchesterredistricting.com).

Finally, Kate provided an update on the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) situation at Lynch. Letters were sent out to all parents at Lynch before the holiday with a form the parents needed to complete and return by 12/22/11, signifying they wanted their child(ren) to be transferred out of Lynch to another school, and what school preference they desired. Superintendent Bill MacAlduff is now in the process of placing those children as evenly as possible across the classrooms at Lincoln, Muraco, and V-O/Parkhurst, but overall, it appears that no classroom will be pushed to exceed the 20-student maximum goal we strive for. Lynch parents will receive notification of the placement this week, and will have until 1/6/12 to accept or reject that placement. All children will enter their new classes on Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

The October 3, 2011 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved as is.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Lietza Molloy presented the year-to-date actuals through December 31, 2011. Overall, the LSPA shows a Closing Balance of \$28,989.94. Lietza announced that we have exceeded our annual goal for the Direct Appeal, receiving \$27,555 from 232 families, a 70% participation level. This represents a \$4,800 increase in receipts versus the same time last year. On the expense side, receipts for the \$200 per classroom and specialist allocation continue to come in, but only about 30% of teachers have submitted anything. Kate Carpini plans to speak Kate Scanlon to remind teachers of this additional resource.

The LSPA approved the December YTD Treasurer's Report.

## **CO-PRESIDENTS' REPORT**

Kate Carpini thanked everyone who contributed to the Direct Appeal, and specifically to Annie Westlund for her great leadership of the effort as ways & Means Chair. Although our revenue goal was met, Kate still would like to find a way to increase participation. The LSPA discussed approaches to communicate that, while the goal has been met, we still would love to see everyone contribute, no matter what the amount. Kate accepted the feedback and plans to consider how best to share this message with the broader community.

Kate also offered a huge thanks to Anita Colasante and her committee for a very successful, well-run Book Fair. She also thanked Allison Bayiates and everyone on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade committee who made the Ice Cream Social so successful. The class raised \$2,000 from the event.

Planning for the Pancake Breakfast is now in full swing: scheduled for January 21<sup>st</sup>, the committee is working on getting donations of food, setting up volunteer schedules, etc. As we always need more volunteers, please contact Allison if you can give some time to the event.

The growing up and reaching out committee is focusing on one local charity (Dana Farber Cancer Institute) and one international charity (Sudan Educational Fund) this year. While the latter is more fund-raising, Dana Farber affords more active volunteer opportunities, so the goal is to do something one time per month. Despite this focus, the long-standing relationship with the Mt. Vernon House continues. The director of the house came to give a "walk in their shoes" talk to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders, to help them understand what it's like to be elderly by bringing "props" that could simulate eyesight problems, lack of balance, painful joints, etc.

Kate shared an email from Sarah Girotti which outlined a few updates from the School Committee:

- The Committee is preparing for a 1/10 meeting on the budget. The needs are greater than the money available. The Selectmen are considering an override on the ballot this spring.
- On January 17<sup>th</sup>, the first public meeting to discuss the redistricting committee's efforts will be held at McCall. At this time, the committee has only begun discussing possible approaches – including school choice, grade level schools, or traditional neighborhood schools. For more information, please visit the committee's website at [www.winchesterredistricting.com](http://www.winchesterredistricting.com)

Kate announced that we will not have a Mentor Program this year, as no chairperson has stepped up to run the program and it is now officially too late in the year to get the program off the ground. The Mentor program has historically allowed 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders to indicate an interest about which they would like to learn more, and the committee finds adult experts to mentor children. Examples of past mentoring topics given were archery, cake decorating, hair styling/braiding, and drafting. The experience culminates with Mentor Night, at which the kids create a display of what they did and perhaps showcase their new-found skill.

The LSPA spent some time discussing how to alleviate one of the biggest challenges of running the program, which is finding mentors for the kids. A suggestion was made to capture professional or personal interests of parents in the information/contact forms that get filled out at the start of school, and use this to create a database of interested mentors. The hope was to not completely abandon the program and rejuvenate it for next school year.

The meeting concluded at 10:00am.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Shepard.